

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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NSC-05 CIEP-01 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3018

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

FBIS OKINAWA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON, EAGR, CH

SUBJECT: NEW PRAGMATIC EMPHASIS IN AGRICULTURAL POLICY

1. AS CHINA PREPARES TO CONVENE ITS SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE TO LEARN FROM TACHAI, THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL MODEL, HINTS OF A NEW PRAGMATIC EMPHASIS IN AGRICULTURAL POLICY HAVE BEGUN TO EMERGE IN CRITICISM OF THE "GANG OF FOUR'S" INTERFERENCE WITH THE TACHAI MOVEMENT. THE THRUST OF THIS CRITICISM, DIRECTED AGAINST THE GANG'S OPPORTUNISTIC SLANDER OF TACHAI TO HINDER AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, PORTENDS A SOFTENING OF SOME OF THE SHARPER IDEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE TACHAI MOVEMENT.

2. TACHAI, OF COURSE, STAND FOR ADVANCED IDEOLOGICAL VALUES AS WELL AS PRODUCTION RECORDS. SUCH "GOOD" POINTS AS ACHIEVEMENT OF A HIGHER DEGREE OF COLLECTIVIZATION, ABOLITION OF PRIVATE PLOTS AND THE ABSENCE OF RURAL FREE TRADE ARE LINKED WITH THE TACHAI CONCEPT. ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THESE ARE CONDITIONS FOR REACHING TACHAI STATUS, THE CONNOTATION IS DEFINITELY THERE AND COULD EASILY HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED SO BY OVERZEALOUS CADRES. BEGINNING WITH THE BOURGEOIS

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RIGHTS CAMPAIGN IN 1975, A NUMEROUS, ALBEIT SCATTERED,

REPORTS OF PRESSURE BY LOCAL LEADERSHIP ON THESE ACTIVITIES
HAVE COME TO LIGHT.

3. IN PREPARATION FOR THE UPCOMING TACHAI CONFERENCE,
STEPPED UP MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE TACHAI CAMPAIGN HAS
PORTRAYED THE GANG AS BEING ANTI-PRODUCTION, SAYING THEY
ATTACKED TACHAI AS BEING A "PRODUCTION MODEL ONLY" OR
AS BEING CONCERNED WITH "PULLING THE CART WITHOUT CARING
IN WHICH DIRECTION IT IS GOING; THE GROUP WAS ALSO CHARGED
WITH HAVING CRITICIZED MECHANIZATION AS BEING CONCERNED "ONLY
WITH MODERNIZATION." POINTING UP THE NEW LEADERSHIP DIRECTION,
GANG OPPOSITION TO RURAL FREE TRADE FAIRS AND HOUSEHOLD SIDELINE
OCCUPATIONS (BY WHICH INDIVIDUALS EARN MONEY) IS NOW
BEING CITED IN PEOPLE'S DAILY (NOVEMBER 30) AS EVIDENCE OF THEIR
OBSTRUCTION IN AGRICULTURE. IN THE SAME VEIN VC OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE WU TEH IN HIS RECENT NPC STATE-
MENT CALLED FOR INDIVIDUAL OR VOLUNTARY (SZU CHUEH)
RESTRICTION OF BOURGEOIS RIGHTS--SUGGESTING
THAT RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONTRACTION OF THESE RIGHTS
LAY PRIMARILY WITH THE INDIVIDUAL.

4. COMMENT: THE BROAD OUTLINES OF CHINA'S AGRICULTURAL
POLICY, BASED ON INDUCING RURAL UNITS TO HELP THEMSELVES
RAISE GRAIN OUTPUT IN THE MOLD OF TACHAI, HAVE BEEN
WELL ESTABLISHED AND ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE IN QUESTION.
THE NEW LEADERSHIP SEEMS MORE CONCERNED WITH IMPLEMENTATION
AND MORE SPECIFICALLY WITH REMOVING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL
RESTRAINTS THAT HAVE AT TIMES BEEN USED BY IDEOLOGUES
AND OPPORTUNISTS TO HINDER PERFORMANCE. BY IMPLICATION,
CHINA'S PRESENT LEADERS WOULD BE WILLING TO PLAY UP
TACHAI'S PRODUCTION RECORD OR AT LEAST GIVE IT GREATER
WEIGHT IN THE EQUATION.

5. THE NEW TACHAI MESSAGE WILL PROBABLY ATTEMPT TO
CONVEY A BALANCED WEIGHTING OF IDEOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC
PRIORITIES, BUT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR IT TO AVOID
AN INTERPRETATION IN FAVOR OF PRODUCTION. IF OUR
READING OF THE SITUATION IS CORRECT AND THERE IS
SOME LOOSENING OF IDEOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS ON
AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, THE TENDENCY
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TO OVERREACT WILL BE GREAT. LOCAL CADRE WILL BE HARD
PRESSED TO KEEP IT FROM GETTING OUT OF HAND. WHILE THE
NEW LEADERSHIP UNDOUBTEDLY RECOGNIZES THESE PITFALLS, IT
GIVES EVERY INDICATION OF BEING WILLING TO RISK SOME
DEGREE OF IDEOLOGICAL BACKSLIDING IN THE RURAL SECTOR
IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE TANGIBLE RESULTS IN PRODUCTION.
CROSS

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